

4.7 Health

The NLSY97 collects information on the general health of respondents; in round 1, selected respondents also provided data on their health practices and knowledge.

4.7 Table 1. Health Subtopics and Universe Restrictions

<i>NLSY97 User's Guide</i> Subtopics	Round 1 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)	Rounds 2–4 Universe (Age as of 12/31/96)
Status	all ages	all ages
Practices and Knowledge	13	—

Status

Youth Questionnaire. All youths are asked to report their height and their weight and to state the level of their general health in every round. In the self-administered section, youths further describe their weight (very underweight, slightly underweight, about the right weight, slightly overweight, very overweight) and their current weight strategy (lose weight, gain weight, stay the same weight, not doing anything about weight). Youths also state whether they have entered puberty and their age at the time of onset.

In round 1, if the respondent did not live with a parent/guardian at the time of the survey, he or she was questioned on the source of any health insurance coverage that included physician or hospital care.

The round 4 survey included a question series concerning how often the respondent felt certain ways during the month before the interview date. Respondents reported the frequency of being nervous, feeling calm and peaceful, feeling downhearted and blue, being happy, and feeling so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer them up. Answer choices were all, most, some, or none of the time during that month. This series is located in the self-administered section of the questionnaire in questions YSAQ282B–YSAQ282G.

Parent Questionnaire (round 1). The round 1 parent interview provided additional information about the youth's general health. The responding parent reported any past or present medical condition(s) that limited the youth's ability to attend school regularly, to do regular school work, or to work at a job for pay. The survey specifically asked whether the youth suffered from any of the following conditions:

- Chronic health condition or life-threatening disease
- Learning disability
- Part of body missing or deformed

- Physical, emotional, or mental condition
- Trouble seeing, hearing, or speaking

For each health condition, the responding parent was asked how old the youth was when the condition was first noticed and whether the youth was currently limited by the condition. Data on the youth's health insurance coverage were also collected from the responding parent.

Additional information about the general health of the parent, his or her partner or spouse, and, in some cases, the youth's absent biological parents is described in section 4.6.7, "Parent Characteristics."

Practices and Knowledge

The round 1 NLSY97 interview included a series of questions, addressed to youths born in 1983, on respondents' health practices and knowledge. The health practices questions asked about the number of days in a typical school week that the youth ate breakfast, the number of days in a typical week the youth ate green vegetables or fruits, the number of days in a typical week that the youth engaged in exercise lasting 30 minutes or more, and the percent of the time that the youth wore a seatbelt.

Further round 1 questions assessed these youths' knowledge of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Two questions asked the youth to choose the most effective method of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases—withdrawal, condom, or birth control pill. The youth also stated at which point in the female menstrual cycle he or she believed pregnancy was most likely to occur. Respondent answers to these questions are depicted in Table 2.

4.7 Table 2. Knowledge about Pregnancy and STDs among Youths Born in 1983 (Round 1)

	Male	Female	Total
Which of these methods is the most effective for preventing pregnancy?			
Withdrawal	283	256	539
Condom	379	271	650
Birth control pill	204	279	483
Which of these methods is the most effective for preventing sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS or gonorrhea?			
Withdrawal	258	218	476
Condom	588	559	1147
Birth control pill	34	32	66
When during the female monthly cycle of menstrual periods is pregnancy most likely to occur?			
Right before the period begins	104	165	269
During the period	107	88	195
About a week after the period begins	84	59	143
About two weeks after the period begins	57	84	141
Anytime during the month, makes no difference	85	148	233
Don't know	481	317	798

In addition, these youths were asked to state their opinions on whether smoking cigarettes contributed to getting heart disease or getting AIDS. The youths were also surveyed on whether having five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice per week increased the risk of damaging the liver, getting heart disease, getting arthritis, becoming addicted to alcohol, or harming an unborn child.

Parent Questionnaire (round 1). If a youth was born in 1983, the responding parent was questioned on his or her perception of the effects of drinking alcohol on the same health conditions listed in the youth portion of the survey (see above).

Comparison to Other NLS Surveys: Respondents in each cohort have answered questions about their health; however, the specific questions have varied widely as the health sections were modified to reflect the respondents' varying life cycle stages. Health insurance information has been collected from respondents in all cohorts except the Young Men. In 1984, NLSY79 respondents answered health knowledge questions about when pregnancy occurs; the NLSY79 children age 10 and over (10–14 in 1994 and 1996) have responded to this question each year since 1988. Users should refer to the *NLS Handbook* or the appropriate cohort's *User's Guide* for more precise information.

Survey Instruments: Questions in the *Youth Questionnaire* are found in the health (YHEA) and self-administered (YSAQ) sections. In the round 1 *Parent Questionnaire*, these questions are found in sections P6 and PC9.

Related User's Guide Sections

4.5.1 Alcohol Use

4.5.4 Cigarette Use

4.5.8 Sexual Activity & Dating

4.6.7 Parent Characteristics

CD–Main Area of Interest

Health

CD–Supplemental Areas of Interest

Fertility and Pregnancy

Sexual Activity

Substance Use